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LINDA CARDELLINI IS STILL A 'FREAK'

The actress cracks up with Will Ferrell and Mark Wahlberg. 9

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8 TONY AWARDS BEST MUSICAL WINNER!
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HOPEFUL NOTE

Blind busker starts GoFundMe campaign to pay
her medical bills and support her music career. 4-5

NICOLAUS CZARNECKI

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NEWBURY COMICS



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8-YEAR BAN FOR BLATTER

1 FIFA President Sepp Blatter and UEFA boss Michel Platini, the two most powerful men in world soccer, were banned for eight years Monday for ethics violations, leaving the world's most popular sport rudderless in a sea of corruption cases. The pair, who were also fined, had been suspended in October while an investigation was carried out. **REUTERS**



HOMELESS IN RAIN

2 As Los Angeles grapples with a huge homelessness problem, El Nino weather patterns are likely to bring torrential downpours in coming months and add to the misery of the thousands of people who sleep on the city's streets. Los Angeles' homeless population is estimated at 44,000, with many of them concentrated in a bleak and chaotic square-mile patch of downtown known as Skid Row. **REUTERS**

NEW TRIAL IN BALTIMORE

3 A Baltimore police officer will face retrial on charges of manslaughter related to the death of Freddie Gray starting June 13, a Maryland judge ruled Monday, after the officer's first trial ended in a deadlocked jury. Officer William Porter was the first of six officers to be tried in connection with Gray's death. **REUTERS**



7

THINGS YOU
NEED TO KNOW

BAKER LENDS A HAND

7 In an effort to help the Salvation Army reach its donation goal for the season, Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker helps out by ringing the bell at the Salvation Army Red Kettle in Downtown Crossing on Monday. Baker spent more time clicking the shutter than ringing the bell as an endless amount of people requested to have a selfie taken with him.



MAIN PHOTO BY NICOLAUS CZARNECKI, ALL OTHER PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

HIGHEST-PAID T EMPLOYEE

4 The MBTA employee with the biggest paycheck this year earned \$315,000 and worked 4,455 hours, according to a report. The unnamed worker clocked 2,600 hours of overtime on top of a base salary of \$85,000 and a back-pay sum of \$59,000, MBTA's Chief Administrator Brian Shortleeve told the agency's oversight board Monday, according to the State House News Service. About one in four T employees earned more than \$100,000 in 2015 in gross pay, Shortleeve also said. **METRO**



6 US TROOPS KILLED

5 Six American troops were killed in Afghanistan on Monday when a suicide bomber on a motorbike struck their patrol near Bagram air base, a U.S. official said, in the latest high-profile attack claimed by Taliban insurgents. Just days ago, the Pentagon warned of deteriorating security in Afghanistan in the second half of 2015 and a rise in the number of effective strikes by Taliban insurgents. NATO's Resolute Support mission in Kabul said that the attack killed six Resolute Support troops and wounded three others. **REUTERS**

BC ALUMNI BEAT IVY

6 Alumni from Boston College, who now work as analysts and portfolio managers at some of the world's best known hedge and mutual funds, beat out graduates from Ivy League and other top tier universities in selecting top performing U.S. stocks, according to SumZero. **REUTERS**



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Dozens of rescued bunnies need homes

In what it calls one of the biggest rescues of its kind, the MSPCA this month took in more than 25 rabbits from one home.

After their recovery from a Hampshire County home, the animals have been moved to the MSPCA's Jamaica Plain adoption center. Now, with its shelter space for the cuddly critters overburdened, the organization is seeking owners for its stock of bunnies.

In mid-January, the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals plans to hold a fee-free adoption weekend to help find its rabbits new homes. On Jan. 16 and 17, the state's adoption hubs will waive



25 rabbits have been surrendered to the MSPCA-Angell from a single home. **NIKOLAUS CZARNIECKI**

the usual fees of \$75 in Boston and \$55 on the Cape.

"We have so many rabbits that the room set aside for them is completely overwhelmed, and we now have to house them in our two cat colony rooms, which means space for our cats is limited," Boston adoption center manager Alyssa Krieger said in a statement.

The bunnies are between 6 months and 2 years old. There are 47 rabbits being housed in Boston, the MSPCA said.

"In times like these,

the MSPCA can usually redistribute animals to its two other adoption centers in Methuen and Centerville on Cape Cod to make space," MSPCA spokesman Rob Halpin said in an email. "But that's not the case this time."

Halpin said the rescue in Hampshire County came after an owner voluntarily surrendered the bunnies after the animals, which were not spayed or neutered, continued to breed until the population's size was out of control.

SPENCER BUELL



Michelle Abadia sings "Melodies From the Subways" to pursue passion and fund medical needs.



NATE HOMAN
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Michelle Abadia sits at Harvard Station early each morning that her T performer permit allows, strumming her guitar and singing to an audience she cannot see.

"Music was my passion from an early age. I don't have a memory without it," Abadia said. "I am told that I was helping tune the piano when I was 3. There's a legend that I was humming tunes at 18 months. I can't verify that, but I've been told. It's ingrained in me."

She lost her sight to congenital cataracts at the age of 4 after six unsuccessful eye surgeries. She has started a GoFundMe page hoping to raise \$20,000 to fund her

musical career and to help pay medical bills. But her inability to see is no obstacle to her musical abilities, as anyone who sees her fingers dance across the strings of her guitar can attest. She learned to play by ear, which she said gave her an edge.

"It's hard when you don't come from a musical family because they view it as a hobby," Abadia said. "My mom wanted me to excel at it, but the family thought I would change my focus once I hit college."

She earned a double degree in language studies and music at Boston College, and went on to earn a masters in French literature and International

ish at several colleges in the area and working as an interpreter in courtrooms.

"The commuters are half asleep, and I don't know how effective I can be in brightening their days, but some people say I do," Abadia said. "It's hard because I am my worst critic, even when people are friendly."

As a child, the music director under whom she was studying told Abadia she couldn't play in an ensemble. She said this was a profound yet aggravating sense of inspiration.

"I was told things like, 'you'll never set foot on a stage,'" Abadia said. "And that was extremely motivating. I needed to be able to 'follow choral conducting,' and the director did not see how I could do that without being able to see."

Last year, she released

a live Christmas album, "Christmas Around My World." Her most recent album, "Melodies From the Subways" was released in October.

"The idea of singing in the subway started in

"For anyone who is blind wants to be a musician, or anything, I would tell them to follow their dreams."

Abadia

al Latin American Studies from Tufts. After that, she earned a New England Conservatory masters for vocal performances.

Now she is trying to earn a living as a musician, after teaching Span-

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1002091

Blind Brighton woman sings melodies of a patient and performer

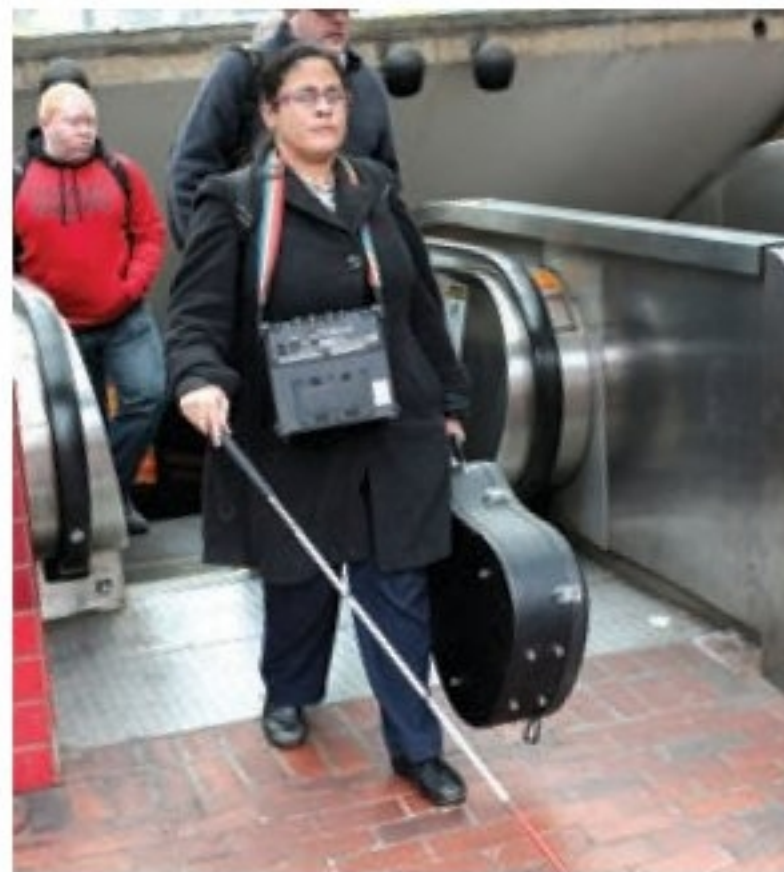
September 2014 so I could expose myself musically and so I could get over social anxiety," Abadia said. "If this isn't exposure, I don't know what else is. Playing for people in their morning commute gives me the chance to maybe make someone's Monday morning a little brighter."

Brightening up a person's day became more than a pastime after she suffered what she described as a mental breakdown while working as a professor.

"I worked as a French and Spanish professor at various colleges around, such as Emerson College, Babson College, and Framingham State, while trying to be a performer," Abadia said. "Meanwhile, the onset of mental illness was beginning to kick in."

She said despite her ability to achieve academically and teach on a college level, her mental health issues began to increase, and she knew she needed to pursue her passion in order to bring light to a sightless life.

"I have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, deep depression, some symptoms of borderline personality dis-



Michelle Abadia is visually impaired and plays her guitar at Harvard Square station. **NICOLAUS CZARNECKI**

order, body dysmorphic disorder, among others," Abadia said. "But since I was a child, music has been my only source of light."

Abadia said the misconception of performing or achieving while living with a disability is that people have told her that she needed to accomplish larger-than-life feats in order to overcome a deficiency.

"For anyone who is blind and wants to be a musician, or anything, I would tell them to follow their dreams," Abadia said. "Often I was told 'you have something wrong, so you have to compensate for your loss.' And that overcompensation for whatever loss it may be makes it seem like the individual meant to lose the facility they had."

Burning Legs?

Varicose veins are **more** than a cosmetic problem. They can be associated with **Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)** and **Pulmonary Embolism (PE)**, both of which claim up to **300,000** lives a year in the United States.

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FDA overturns 30-year ban on blood donations by gay men

The FDA said its decision to reverse the policy was based on an examination of the latest science which shows that an indefinite ban is not necessary to prevent transmission of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

The United States government on Monday overturned its 30-year ban on blood donations by gay men, saying they can now donate 12 months after their last sexual contact with another man.

"Ultimately, the 12-month deferral window is supported by the best available scientific evidence, at this point in time, relevant to the U.S. population," Dr. Peter Marks, deputy director of the FDA's biologics division, said in a statement.

The move brings the United States in line with countries such as the United Kingdom,



Blood drive GETTY IMAGES

Australia and New Zealand which also have 12-month deferral periods.

Gay rights advocates said the updated policy remains discriminatory.

"It is ridiculous and counter to the public health that a married gay man in a monogamous relationship can't give blood, but a promiscuous straight man who has had hundreds of opposite sex partners in the last year can," said Jared Polis, a Democratic congressman and co-chair of the Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus, a caucus of openly gay members of

"These published studies document no change in risk to the blood supply with use of the 12-month deferral. ... Similar data are not available for shorter deferral intervals."

Food and Drug Administration

Congress.

The FDA said it has worked with other government agencies and considered input from outside advisory bodies, and has "carefully examined the most re-

cent available scientific evidence to support the current policy revision."

During Australia's switch from an indefinite blood donor deferral policy on gay men, essentially a ban, to

a 12-month deferral, studies evaluating more than 8 million units of donated blood were performed using a national blood surveillance system, the FDA said.

Additionally, the agency said people with hemophilia and related blood clotting disorders will continue to be banned from donating blood due to potential harm they could suffer from large needles. Previously they were banned due to an increased risk of HIV transmission.

The agency said it has put in place a safety monitoring system for the blood supply which it expects to provide "critical information" to help inform future FDA blood donor policies.

The FDA said its policies have helped reduce HIV transmission rates from blood transfusions from 1 in 2,500 to 1 in 1.47 million.

The FDA first proposed the changes in May. It received some 700 public comments. About half recommended keeping the ban in place.

REUTERS

BRIEF

Oregon woman held in Las Vegas Strip sidewalk rampage

An Oregon woman who intentionally drove her car onto a crowded Las Vegas Strip sidewalk on Sunday night, killing one person and injuring at least 35 others, was homeless and had been living in her vehicle with her 3-year-old child, police said.

Lakeisha N. Holloway, 24, was arrested a short distance from the scene of the carnage, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Sheriff Joe Lombardo said at a news conference.

"She didn't appear to be distressed due to her actions," Lombardo said.

He said there are no indications Holloway drove through pedestrians as a militant attack, but that he could not completely rule out that possibility because the investigation was ongoing.

Holloway, who is from the Portland area, had been homeless and living in her car in Las Vegas for about a week with her 3-year-old child, who was in the car when she drove into the pedestrians, Lombardo said.

Clark County District Attorney Steven Wolfson said his office planned to bring charges of murder with use of a deadly weapon and other counts against Holloway.

University Medical Center treated 15 patients, with three listed as critical, two in serious condition and the rest discharged, spokeswoman Danita Cohen said in an email.

An 11-year-old was among the injured, along with visitors from Montreal, Canada, she said.

REUTERS

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Republican Graham drops out of 2016 presidential race

Senator Lindsey Graham, a respected conservative voice on defense and foreign policy issues, dropped out of the 2016 Republican presidential race on Monday after months of barely registering in opinion polls.

Graham struggled to gain traction in a crowded Republican field dominated by front-runner Donald Trump, and he faced the potentially embarrassing prospect of being trounced in the Feb. 20 primary in his home state of South Carolina.

Graham, an early and staunch advocate of using U.S. ground troops against Islamic State, said his long-shot campaign had

made headway in influencing the party's debate on the conflict.

"I got into this race to put forward a plan to win a war that we cannot afford to lose, and to turn back the tide of isolationism that was rising in our party. I believe we've made enormous progress in this effort," he said in a video posted on YouTube.

He noted many of his Republican rivals for the November 2016 election now support placing more ground troops in Syria, and promised to continue his hawkish criticism of President Barack Obama's strategy in Syria.

"I'm far more confident today that our party



Lindsey Graham GETTY IMAGES

will reject the Obama doctrine of leading from behind and will provide the strong leadership America needs to restore our military and take the fight to our enemies," he said in the video.

Graham, a third-term senator from South Carolina, had repeatedly been relegated to the early "undercard" debate of low-polling Republican

candidates. He registered below 1 percent in most national polls and in the latest Reuters/Ipsos poll of the Republican field.

His withdrawal, on the day of the deadline for removing his name from the primary ballot in South Carolina, will have little impact on the national Republican race, which still has 13 candidates.

But he could have some influence in the vital South Carolina contest if he makes an endorsement. He did not immediately back any other candidates, although his Republican presidential rivals raced to praise him. REUTERS

Boy Scout master recovering after fight with bear

A New Jersey Boy Scout master was recovering Monday after a run-in with a black bear that pulled him into its cave and mauled him before he hit the animal with a hammer, played dead and yelled instructions to the scouts who called authorities on a cellphone.

The bear grabbed Christopher Petronino, 50, on Sunday when the scout leader was showing his son and two other scouts, ages 12 to 14, a cave that he regularly visits at Split Rock Reservoir in Kinnelon, New Jersey, about 29 miles west of New York City.

Petronino entered the cave, which he thought was empty, when the bear grabbed his foot and pulled him farther inside, said Bob Considine, spokesman for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

Petronino suffered bites and scratches on his head, shoulders and leg, authorities said. Petronino tried to fend off the bear, hitting him twice in the head with a rock hammer, wildlife officials said.

"The man fought back," said Dave Chanda, director of New Jersey Division of Fish and Wild-



Black bear GETTY IMAGES

"They knew what to do. They probably saved the gentleman's life." Chanda

life. "It appears he played dead for a little bit."

Petronino then pulled his sweatshirt over his head and curled into a fetal position. He yelled to the scouts to get help and to place any food they had at the cave entrance to lure the bear out.

None of the scouts were injured. They used a cellphone to alert authorities and tied bandannas

to sticks to help rescuers find them.

The bear eventually left the cave and then escaped. Authorities said it will not be pursued for capture.

"It was just defending an area that it set up to spend the winter," Chanda said.

Authorities praised the scouts for aiding in the rescue of their Scout master, who was treated at a local hospital.

Officials said hikers should not enter caves, particularly during bear hibernation season, and should not use food as a lure with bears. They also said anyone who is attacked by a bear should fight back but not play dead. **REUTERS**

Santa comes early at Metro



Bernard, 20 months old, opens his present from Metro Magic at a party Saturday. Tony's Metro Magic is an annual toy drive for underprivileged children. **NICOLAUS CZARNECKI**

BRIEF

Group says U.S. police killed at least 1,152 people this year

Police in the United States killed at least 1,152 people in the United States this year through Dec. 15, with the 60 largest police departments disproportionately killing black people, according to data compiled by activists who run the Mapping Police Violence project.

The group said most police departments did not provide numbers on officer-involved fatalities, so its data come from three crowdsourced databases: FatalEncounters.org, the U.S. Police Shootings Database and KilledbyPolice.net as well as research through media, social media, obituaries, police reports and other sources.

Forty percent of people killed by police in the country's 60 biggest police departments were black, while the African-American population in those jurisdictions was 20 percent, the report said.

The group, formed by data scientist Samuel Sinyangwe and activists Johnetta Elzie and DeRay Mckesson, said the 2015 figure compares with 1,172 last year and 1,140 in 2013. The group says it believes its database reflects 90 percent-98 percent of police killings since 2013.

The project compiles data on all fatal uses of force by the police, including gunshot, asphyxiation, vehicles and Tasers. It includes unintentional killings such as people who died

of a medical emergency while being arrested or restrained, and off-duty incidents.

Police killings, especially of black people, have sparked protests in a number of U.S. cities over the last year and a half.

Although such killings are not new — for example, New York police shot killed more than 40 people a year in the 1970s and now shoot and kill about 12 a year — widespread use of phones to record video as well as police bodycams and dashboard cameras have renewed focus on use of lethal force. Videotapes have raised questions about officers' justifications of shootings, such as saying the suspect had pointed a weapon at them or advanced on them. **REUTERS**



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Christina Aguilera looking to ruin Gwen Stefani's 'Voice' fun

Gwen Stefani and Blake Shelton may be doing their best to keep things steamy and headline-grabbing in their relationship while "The Voice" is on hiatus, but one of their colleagues is gearing up to spoil all the fun. Christina Aguilera is set to return to the hit show next season, with Stefani taking a break. And apparently, she's taking a special amount of pleasure in that aspect, according to Radar Online. "Christina said that it was her show and gave a really big spiel about how she thinks that Gwen used this Blake thing to try and stay on the show," a source close to "The Voice" says. "Now people are dreading her return."

Shelton had floated the idea — jokingly,

we think — of letting Stefani stay on along with Aguilera, bloating the coaching bench to five, but that's not happening.

"They have been switching the female judges on and off for over three seasons now, and it has nothing to do with how well Gwen is performing," the source explains. "As of right now, there are no plans to make it five judges on the show."

ALL PHOTOS
GETTY IMAGES



the word

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The Rock introduces his daughter to the world

It turns out that the Rock is a big softie. Actor, wrestler and perpetual cufflink-adjuster Dwayne "the Rock" Johnson had some big news yesterday, as he welcomed his first daughter, Jasmine.

Johnson posted a photo to his Facebook page of the newborn on his massive, tattooed chest. "Christmas



came early! Within minutes of being born she was laying on daddy's chest. And being a grateful man takes on a whole new meaning," he writes. Oh, and if you wanted some TMI about the birth itself, Johnson's got you covered. "I was right there during labor, helping [Laura Hashain] breathe, every highly intense contraction, every second of pain, right

there watching the actual birth, cutting the cord and wiping the tears," he writes. "Now don't get me wrong, boys. It wasn't like I was at the end of the table, squatting like a catcher waiting for the fastball to come down the pike. But as men, it's a miracle we should witness because it'll give you a whole new respect for the strength and beauty of a woman."

DAILY VIDEO



A Bondi Beach Kylie Christmas flash mob

Nothing says Christmas like a day at the beach with some drag queens. I mean, if you're Australian, that is. It is a

summer holiday there, after all. This weekend, two drag queens led a team of revelers in swimsuits and Santa hats through a dance routine to "100 Degrees," a track from Kylie Minogue's new Christmas album featuring her sister, Dannii. 'Tis the season!

Carrie Fisher gives Daisy Ridley dating advice

Carrie Fisher is trying to be as helpful as possible to younger "The Force Awakens" co-star Daisy Ridley. "I told her not to go through the crew like wildfire," Fisher tells Graham Norton. "But I also told her not to take any advice from me." But Fisher is just looking out for Ridley, hoping to save her from the kind of experiences she's had to endure. "When I was first in it I never wanted anyone to have the anecdote, 'I slept with Princess Leia,'" Fisher reveals. "I once met a guy that told me he had thought about Princess Leia every day from the age of 12 to 22. When I said, 'Every single day?' he said, 'Actually it was four times a day.'" Ew, gross.



'Furious 7' was so filled with errors

Head's up, "Fast and Furious" fans. You might have to trot out the whole "Hey man, it's only a movie" defense when someone challenges you on the plausibility of the latest installment — or even on its commitment to quality filmmaking — since "Furious 7" has easily outpaced the competition as the most error-filled movie of



2015, according to the website Movie Mistakes. The fast-cars action flick racked up 41 continuity flubs in its runtime, with "Jurassic World" a distant second at 33 mistakes. And what kind of mistakes are we talking about? Oh, just little things — like a character hanging out on the seventh floor of a four-story building. Nothing huge.



@TheRock

Good mornin' from the South. Let's roll... (don't worry about where we're going just get in the truck and don't touch my radio).



@AudraEqualityMc

Why did everyone bring pizza on this flight?!?! And more importantly why will no one share with me?



@rickygervais

At The Golden Globes I might read out the runner up first just to see them run up to the stage and start their speech.



@billyeichner

About to land in LA just asked a flight attendant what to do about Steve Harvey but no one knows what to do tough night



@WhitneyCummings

I'm dyslexic so when I try to 69 I just end up staring at a wall



@kirstiealley

I'm in Kansas cleaning my house like the wife I never wanted to be...Merry Christmas

Cardellini back with the freaks

The "Freaks and Geeks" actor is back with funny boys in "Daddy's Home."



MATT PRIGGE
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Linda Cardellini can hang with the clowns. In her breakthrough role on "Freaks and Geeks," she acted alongside a slew of future comedic stars of the Apatow-verse. Since then, the 40-year-old actress has taken on more serious roles: a long stint on "ER," "Brokeback Mountain" and self-de-

structive types on "New Girl" and "Mad Men."

But with "Daddy's Home," she's back to playing the straight center of a raucous comedy. As Sarah, she has to deal with both her current, uptight husband Brad (Will Ferrell) and the father of her children, Dusty (Mark Wahlberg), a bad boy who wants to reconnect with their kids, and with her too. But Cardellini's Sarah — to the actress' delight — is over him.

Given how long you've been acting alongside funny people, do you still blow takes by cracking up?

Sometimes, for sure. I think it's hard for everybody. Sometimes it wasn't even in front of the camera. Someone behind the camera, even the director, would occasionally have a hard time keeping it together.

I wouldn't say your character is just a killjoy — the classic shrewish wife who wants the boys to behave.

Sean [Anders, the director] and I talked a lot about this. We wanted to make sure she had more dimensions than a stereotypical wife character. I have no problem, playing the wife, because women are wives and daughters and sisters. I loved how she evolved from her younger days,



Will Ferrell and Mark Wahlberg play men vying for the attention of Linda Cardellini in "Daddy's Home." PARAMOUNT PICTURES

that she isn't falling for [Dusty's] ridiculous bad boy charm anymore. And he and Brad were always talking about how wonderful my character is. [Laughs] That made me very happy.

You've said you used to get people coming up to you, confusing you with the character you played briefly on "Boy Meets World," back in the '90s, who almost broke up Cory and Topanga. Did you have similar experiences with people angry you were playing Sylvia, one of Don Draper's last mistresses on "Mad Men"?

I did. People had a complex reaction to her relationship with Don, though. Some people were angry because it's the first time his affairs are found out by his daughter. But people had varied reactions to it.

Was there one in particular that was weird for you?

My mom called me and said my dad had to cover his eyes while he was watching. [Laughs] My mother was asking if I'd ever get out of bed with that man. It was the biggest part of my role, so I hoped not.

ter. [Laughs] I'd be so proud of her for being a good person, but less so that she goes over to the freaks, especially when she gets on that bus.

I'm sure you wouldn't think, "Oh, it's cool that my daughter's following The Dead!"

No way. I would have the police on the phone immediately.

GETTY IMAGES



Always a 'Freak'

Have you watched "Freaks and Geeks" since becoming a mother?

No, I haven't. It would be strange to watch it now as a parent. I always related to it from the child's point-of-view, from Lindsay's point-of-view. Now I would probably relate more to the parents and be terrified if Lindsay was my daughter.

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Right now, the country is engaged in a passionate debate about race and the criminal justice system, a topic that in the past few years has dominated headlines — and there's no sign of that changing. A book by criminology scholars, "Deadly Injustice," uses statistics and real court cases to show exactly what Americans' views on race are, and how they influence the

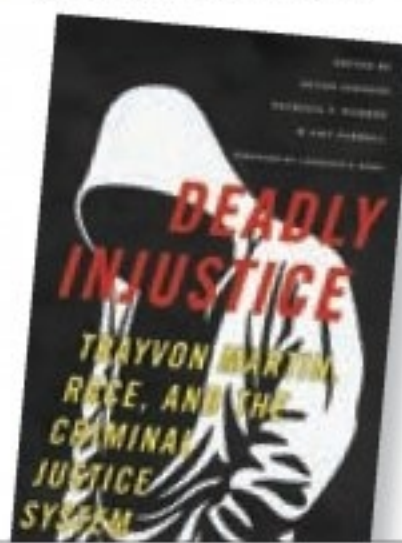
decisions made within our legal system. We talked to one of the authors, George Mason University criminology, law and society professor Devon Johnson to dig a little deeper.

The bulk of the book focuses on Trayvon Martin. What was it about that case that embodied everything you wanted to talk about?

We started developing ideas for the book right after the acquittal of George Zimmerman. The case brought a lot of issues together, such as the public perception of who is suspicious and who is a criminal, police profiling and the court system.

How did social media play a role?

It had a very significant impact on what happened with the case. We know these types of situations have happened many times in the past, but they hadn't garnered this level of national attention. Trayvon's parents filed an online petition to bring attention to the case and put pressure on the prosecu-



Nationwide protests are now commonly organized through social media. GETTY IMAGES

tor's office. It was a turning point in that way.

Millennials and young people really paid close attention to this case, largely because of social media.

Yes. And they can relate to it because [Trayvon] was a young guy and these experiences, particularly for young black men, are experiences that they have every day. ... We saw national-level protests that were organized through social media.

Police brutality against blacks and Latinos now

regularly make the news. What do you think this will mean for society long-term?

Right now we're seeing a continuation of historical trends and patterns. This is not anything new. It's getting significant attention right now, particularly because we have video evidence in some cases, which we did not have before. People of color tend to distrust the criminal justice system more than white folks, but I think for everyone, this is a time where people are really questioning the legitimacy of the criminal

justice system.

The book shows that people perceive neighborhoods with black people as more dangerous, and it's something people do automatically, not consciously. Do you think this is something that can be changed?

These are entrenched problems and patterns with a historical legacy. I do believe more dialogue and increased contact can address some parts of this epidemic, but it isn't going to happen overnight, and it's going to take a sustained effort.

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Simply good eats for the single dude

Are you a single guy? Are you hungry? Do you really wish you knew how to cook? If you've answered "yes" to any or all of these three questions, there's definitely a niche cookbook out there for you. This one comes by way of Avi Shemtov, chef and owner of The Chubby Chickpea, a locally sourced falafel-slinging food truck that treads Boston grounds seven days a week.

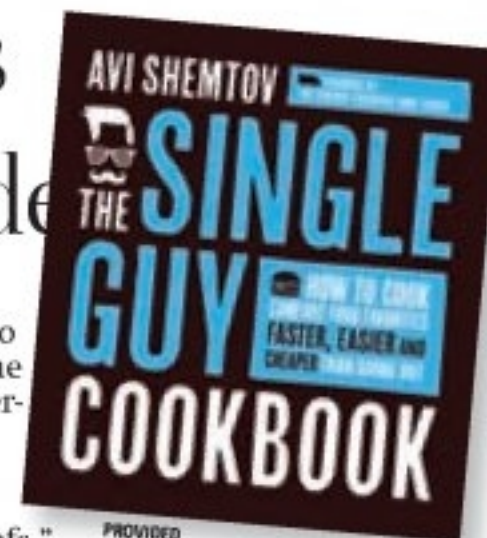
Shemtov, a Sharon native, released "The Single Guy Cookbook" earlier this year, a guide to "man-centric" recipes (think: "Waffle-battered Chicken Tenders" and "One Guy Stir-fry") with commentary written with a bachelor audience in mind.

However, despite his book's title, the 31-year-old wants readers to

know his mission to send singles into the kitchen isn't gender-specific. "Cooking for one person is a challenge, even for the greatest chefs," Shemtov says. "And not that I'm going to rid the world of all the ails of gender roles, but it's the single guy who is often told, 'You can't cook because you're a guy and that's not your thing.'"

He says he found himself offering guidance to his single male pals and wrote the book in the tone of the tips and advice he's passed off over the years. He adds, "It's sort of a survival guide for the single person."

One tip: "For sun-dried tomatoes or marinated mushrooms, use the olive bar [at the grocery store] instead of



buying jars. The average guy will just leave those sitting in their fridge for months, and you could have paid a little bit by the pound."

While not so single himself — he's got a wife and two kids back in Canton — Shemtov certainly knows how to cook, and he'll be at Trident Booksellers (338 Newbury St., Boston, 617-267-8688) on Jan. 6 to prove it. He'll demo Buffalo Chicken Queso, Potato Slaw and Braised Short Rib Crostini and "Kick-Ass Fish Tacos" for attendees, and sign copies of his cookbook from 6-8 p.m. RACHEL RACZKA

Inside McDonald's 'Top Chef' dinner

We went to McDonald's strange tapas dinner party prepared by "Top Chef" and Fairsted Kitchen's Stephanie Cmar.

WILL GORDON
@WillGordonAgain
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Last week in Brookline, McDonald's engaged in an experiment aimed at improving the brand's reputation among discerning eaters. Similar perception-altering attempts at stunts featuring celebrity chefs and fine dining have taken place in New York and Tokyo. For Boston, the fast food giant paid for Washington Square's Fairsted Kitchen to close to the public for a night so Stephanie Cmar of "Top Chef" seasons 10 and 11 fame could serve local food writers a fancied multicourse meal prepared solely from McDonald's ingredients. So I went.

A happier meal

In her opening remarks, Cmar, who joined Fairsted Kitchen as executive chef in May, referred to the importance of engaging in an "honest conversation about food." She proved her own candor, adding that "designing the menu was hilarious" and mentioning that the first course, a chicken croquette prepared from salvaged McNugget parts "kinda tastes like a corndog." Cmar seemed to mean that as a compliment, and appropriately so. Corndogs rule, and her McNugget croquette



did, too. And the most impressive part is that it did so while indeed tasting resolutely McNuggety.

For the next course, Cmar had passed frozen McDonald's fries through a meat grinder and reconstituted them as gnocchi, which was served beneath a slick of Bolognese made from the chain's hamburger and sausage patties. The gnocchi was excellent, partly because Cmar is talented and partly because McDonald's makes fine fries. The Bolognese was pretty good, too, though an indication that even the best chefs can only take McDonald's meat so far.

Dessert was one of the doughnuts for which Cmar is renowned from her Stacked Donuts pop-up days. It was great, but it was also cheating, being "McDonald's-inspired" in that it employed eggs, sugar, and flour from a McDelivery truck rather than the Fairsted pantry.

But what's the big McDeal?

For the better part of six

decades, the McDonald's Corp. excelled at making French fries and money, but in recent years — well, the fries are still good. After a protracted rough patch that led to the ouster of CEO Donald Thompson, the fast feeder's once-dire economic outlook is starting to improve. Global same-store sales were up in the third quarter (though operating revenue continued to fall) and McDonald's stock continues to rise from its late-January nadir.

But stopping a free-fall isn't the same thing as turning it all around, which is why McDonald's seems to be searching for ways to recapture market share amid consumers who are increasingly ambivalent toward its core products. Among the many reasons for the chain's recent struggles, the most glaring may be that the public just doesn't dig Big Macs as much as it used to. No McMuffin promotion

can paper over the fact that erstwhile customers are being lured away by newer burger chains — Shake Shack, Tasty Burger, Smashburger — offering at least the perception of transparency and better, fresher ingredients.

Fast-forward

So what did this stunt prove? That Stephanie Cmar is a wicked good cook, and that McDonald's uses plenty of basic pantry ingredients. And that McDonald's knows how easy it is to bribe

some writers. While the dinner was enjoyable, it was also a cynical ploy that failed to close the perception gap between "McDonald's food" and "good food," because what Cmar served was not McDonald's food in any meaningful way.

Creations by former "Top Chef" contestant Stephanie Cmar. ALL PHOTOS DEBBIE GRUBSTEIN



Fries, anyone?

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The biggest health trends of 2015

It's been a year of common sense winning over gimmicks and fearmongering. We look at the big changes in fitness and nutrition this year, and what they mean for the future. **EVA KIS**



Ingredients get a rethink

Food companies, from fast-casual chains like Chipotle and Panera Bread to major brands like General Mills and Kraft, finally started ditching artificial ingredients and additives for natural ones, like annatto seed and paprika extract to give mac and cheese its yellow color. This was the next step in last year's trend of ditching low-fat products, which, while lower in calories, were usually not healthful. Real ingredients are winning out over marketing gimmicks, and that's a trend companies have recognized will continue to drive the way we eat.

Protein is out, fiber is in

One of the few things our diets are not deficient in is protein, though you wouldn't know it from all the bars, powders, shakes and other supplements telling us to load up on it. But these "healthful snacks" often also come packed with sugar, preservatives and other things you don't want, while missing one vital nutrient that we are definitely lacking: fiber. To get its anti-inflammatory, circulation-boosting, cancer-fighting benefits, you'll have to load up on plant-based foods (which you should be eating more of anyway). Instead of a green juice, reach for a whole apple (the fiber is in the skin) and add more nuts, whole grains, legumes and dark leafy greens into your routine.



HIIT in everything

Packed schedules mean we're always looking to maximize every minute, and this was the year that high-intensity intervals took over every style of workout. Getting more out of less time in the gym, without changing up what you're already doing too much is great, but will HIIT stick around? It's hard to say — the risk of injury is higher when you're pushing your limits, and there's a new emphasis on strength and stretching exercises that counteract sitting-related problems. All of which means HIIT might be better left to pro athletes.



ALL PHOTOS ISTOCK

MAKE HEALTHY YOUR NEW HAPPY

Sleep gets some respect

If there was one mantra being repeated by everyone from fitness trainers to nutritionists and even mental health professionals, it was, "Get more sleep!" Without it, your ability to make long-term memories suffers, your heart doesn't get a much-needed break, and all those cheap calories you're eating to stay awake are wreaking havoc with your blood sugar, which could lead to diabetes. (Not to mention sleeping too little is killing your sex drive.) Aim for between seven and eight hours, but don't go below six.

(Ancient) grains on the menu



The anti-gluten hysteria that has swept grocery stores meant anything with the word "grain" in it was suspect. The pushback over the past year, however, made way for delicious, lesser-known varieties of ancient grains like emmer, khorasan wheat and amaranth, whose nutty flavor and robust texture will make you swear off oatmeal. And grain bowls — which tend to be accompanied by fruit, yogurt and matcha rather than sweeteners — also make for beautiful Instas, which never hurts when starting a trend.

Seaweed is your new healthy condiment

Chia seeds, kale, moringa, matcha ... there's a new superfood for almost every month of the year. Yet 2015's firm favorite isn't quite so exotic.

Seaweed, a longtime favorite in Japanese cuisine, could make any everyday meal more healthful, according to a study. "Certain substances in seaweed may be important for reducing cardiovascular diseases," says Ole G. Mouritsen, a professor of biophysics at the University of Southern Denmark.

Alongside his team, Mouritsen found that by eating bread containing dried seaweed, overweight men ate 16.4 percent fewer calories in the 24-hour period afterward.

What's inside

"Like other algae and vegetables, seaweed is one of the most nutrient-dense foods on the planet," says Alice MacKintosh, nutritional therapist at The Food Doctor Clinic. Made up

of 70 percent protein, it contains all eight essential amino acids, as well as healthy fats and nutrients like vitamins A through E, with high levels of minerals such as calcium, magnesium, iron, selenium and zinc.

The benefits

Seaweed supports a host of vital bodily functions. "Its high antioxidant levels are also particularly appealing to women as skin support," says MacKintosh. "The high

levels of iodine, a nutrient often deficient in Western diets, make it supportive of thyroid function — especially hypofunction — and hormone health."

Servingsize

When it comes to such a highly nutrition-packed ingredient, a little bit goes a very long way. Mouritsen estimates that a person should consume one teaspoon of dried, mixed seaweed daily to benefit from its positive qualities. **ELLEN NOEL**



Add some kelp to your dishes for a satisfying umami note. **ISTOCK**



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PATS D MAY BE THE BEST IN THE NFL

At your holiday gathering with out-of-town family, you could make the case to them that the 2015 Patriots have the best defense in the entire NFL.

Yes, you will initially be accused of having early onset dementia, just like Uncle Hector. But you should not be laughed out of the room.

For the first time in over a decade, the New England defense might just be better than its offense. And it might just be the best defense that this offense-obsessed league has to offer when all is said and done with this season.

The numbers are casually friendly to the Patriots. The unit gives up the sixth fewest points per game in the league. It gives up the sixth fewest yards per game in the league. And it gives up the seventh fewest first downs per game in the league. Nope, that's not "the best" statistically, but things are absolutely trending in that direction.

The Pats didn't allow a touchdown to the Titans until the third quarter. They didn't allow a touchdown at all (just two field goals) to a playoff-hungry Texans team — on the road — a week prior. In the wholly bizarre loss to the Eagles, the Patriots defense forced Philly to punt in their first four drives of the game. And Philly's first four touchdowns scored were direct results of horrid special teams or offensive gaffes.

Buffalo scored just 13 points against the Pats in Week 11. Washington scored just 10 points in Week 9. Miami scored just seven points in Week 8.

The "cause for concern" games were the Giants and Broncos games, but there are

MATT BURKE

OPINION

Matt Burke is the National Sports Editor and a columnist at Metro US.

Follow him on Twitter @burke_metro



excuses to be made in each. In the Broncos game, the Pats held Denver to seven points in the first three quarters and were without the services of Mr. Everything Jamie Collins. The defense had more than done its job prior to Chris Harper's muffed punt return in the fourth quarter — which led to Denver getting the ball at the Pats' 36-yard line. Oh, and if the Patriots do meet the Broncos again this postseason, chances are they'll fare much better against Mr. Osweiler. Bill Belichick now has a solid sample size of game tape to devour regarding Osweiler in the NFL. Guessing he'll see find some inadequacies there.

As far as the Giants game? Again, no Collins, but the defense was far from embarrassing against Eli Manning and Co.

Odell Beckham Jr. had that 87-yard touchdown early on, but after that the Pats defense was locked in. The Giants did not score a touchdown in the second half and the run defense was superb throughout, limiting

Running reinforcements

After working out veteran running back Steven Jackson last week, the Patriots reportedly signed the former Rams superstar Monday. It is a reported one-year deal. The 32-year-old Jackson has not played a snap in the league this year. Jackson joins a backfield that already includes James White, Brandon Bolden and rookie Joey Iosefa — who impressed Sunday against Tennessee.

Rashad Jennings to 39 yards on 11 carries. No, the Patriots don't have any household names on their defense. But truth be told, there aren't many household name defenders in the entire league anymore (thanks, fantasy sports!). The only defensive player in the NFL who gets any air-time these days is fake lumberjack J.J. Watt. And we all know he's the type of guy who would stick a pair of those liquid blood capsules kid vampires wear at Halloween up his nose just to get a reaction.

Know this: When healthy (the Malcom Brown-sized caveat, of course), the Pats do have the horses up and down the defensive depth chart to be considered "the best." Malcolm Butler is tremendous. Devin McCourty is as solid as solid can be. Dont'a Hightower might be the most underrated player in the NFL and Collins could challenge him for that title. Jabaal Sheard has been a find. Akiem Hicks, too. Chandler Jones is unstoppable. Jerod Mayo is a flat-out leader. And Rob Ninkovich is invaluable. This defense is closing in on "great" status, relative to today's NFL. Believe it, and don't be afraid to say it out loud.



If you take a thorough look at the numbers, you'll see that the Patriots' defense has been excellent this season. GETTY IMAGES

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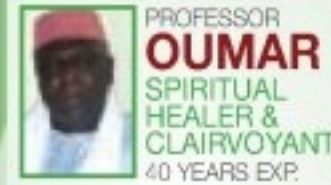
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Aries Don't go into battle with someone who just wants the best for you. Self-discipline and changes that could improve your image will pay off.



Taurus If you aim high, you will finish what you start. Picking up odds and ends for the upcoming festivities will get you in the spirit of the season.



Gemini Stay focused or you will misinterpret a situation or offer. Read between the lines and don't leave anything to chance.



Cancer Put your heart into making your home ready for the holiday season. Spending time with friends, family or children will brighten your day.



Leo Control your emotions and avoid getting into a spat. At work and at home, you are best off keeping the peace. Make personal improvements.



Virgo If you control whatever situation, you will be deemed a hero. Your insightful way of handling others will result in an unexpected surprise.



Libra Don't run yourself ragged trying to take care of demanding people who have little concern for your well-being. Focus on yourself.



Scorpio Your imagination will lead you in a wonderful direction. Creative ideas will help you incorporate comfort and convenience into your living quarters.



Sagittarius Bring about changes that will improve your life. Put an end to bad habits and unsavory influences. Choose your lot in life.



Capricorn Relationships will develop through networking functions and social activities. Attend an industry party and explore the possibilities.



Aquarius You'll have some good ideas that, once developed, will help you bring in extra cash. Take action and discuss your plans with someone.



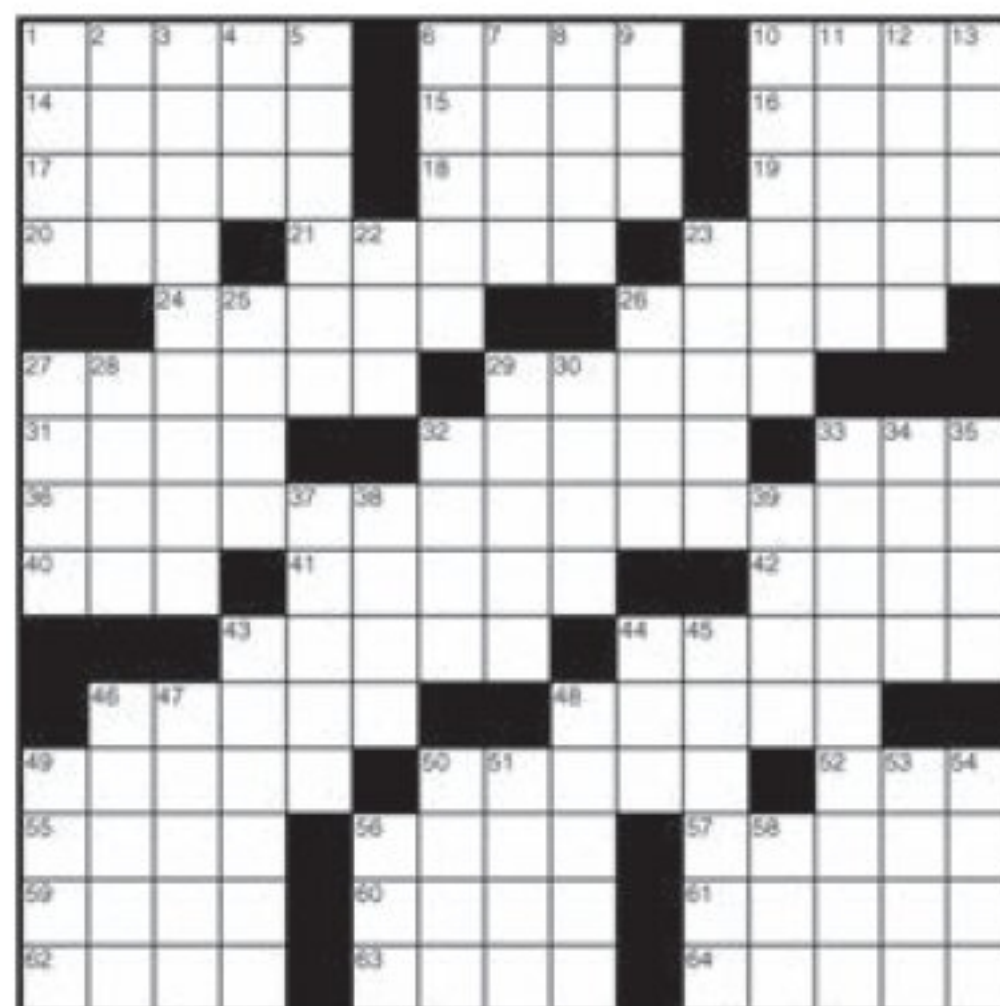
Pisces Offer your help to a cause you believe in. Find out what you can do to assist older relatives during the taxing festive season. **EUGENIA LAST**

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21 Fat, to a chemist
23 Dance moves
24 First veep
26 Origins
27 Mini-vise (hyph.)
29 — -de-lis
31 Sketch
32 Ram, in astrology
33 Tackle a slope
36 Sporadic (hyph.)
40 Toady's answer
41 Find quarters
42 Makes a choice
43 Blair and Danza
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46 Pizzerias' needs
48 Inca's — Picchu
49 Fully conscious
50 Oater action
52 — -Magnon man
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56 Marble streak
57 Set a price
59 Blanc and Gibson
60 Smokehouse

Down

1 Mushroom
2 "Dukes of Hazzard" deputy
3 Canary Islands port (2 wds.)
4 Yves' summer
5 Chaos
6 Barks excitedly
7 Sewing kit
8 Egg on
9 Veld grazer
10 Pianist — Borge
11 Cove
12 Purse closers
13 Deadly snakes
22 Baby sitter's bane
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25 Consarn it!
26 Lagoon protector
27 Jade
28 Film
29 Swamp chorus
30 Carbon-based



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32 Gibb or Rooney
33 Kind of woodpecker
34 Wind catcher
35 Part of MIT
37 Solo
38 Charged particles

39 Roman invader
43 Nobelist nun
44 Chat
45 Cream-filled pastry
46 Young screecher
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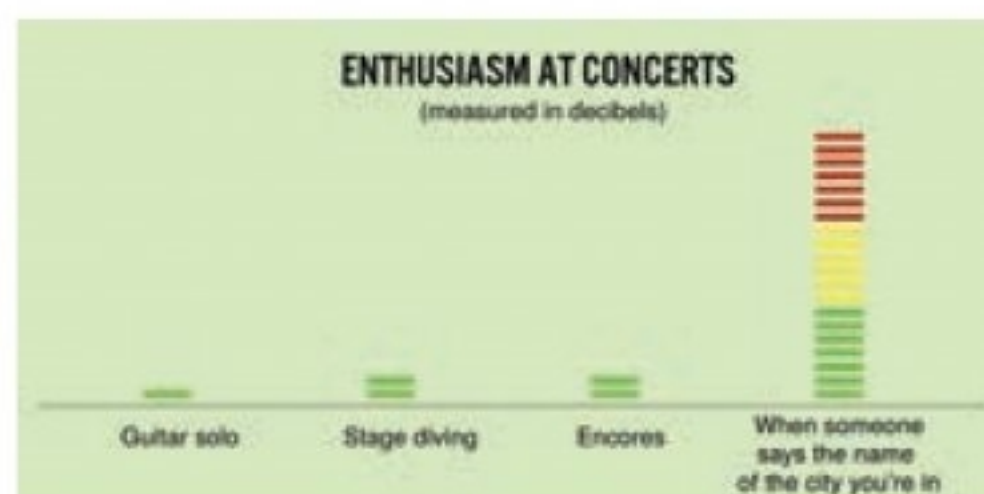
easy

5			4			3		2
	8		1	3	9			5
	4		2					
	9	1	8			2		
		5			6	9	8	
				8		3		
2			6	4	1		5	
8		9			3			4

hard

6								4
	2	1						
4	9		6	1	5		7	
9			1	5	6			
	7			4			5	
			8	3	7			1
	5		7	9	3		1	4
						3	6	
1								5

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